



Sacred Texts

- Christianity draws sacred writings from two sections of the Bible: Old Testament (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy), and New Testament.
- Old Testament is Judaic tradition of the law and prophets.
- New Testament is Christian tradition of apostles.



- New Testament = 4 main components (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John).
- Followed by Acts of Apostles (reports the spread of Christianity after Jesus' death).
- Third section = epistles (letters).
- Last section = book of Revelation.



Gospel of Mark

- Oldest of the four, written c. 70 CE.
- Possibly traveled with Paul on missionary trips.
- Also thought to have been with Peter in Rome.
- Shortest of four gospels, 661 verses.
- Synoptic gospels along with Matthew and Luke (similar stories).



Gospel of Matthew

- Probably written c. 80 CE.
- One of 12 apostles.
- Preached in North Africa and Middle East after Jesus' death.
- Longest of four gospels.
- Traces Jesus' family line through forty-two generations.
- Wrote Sermon on the Mount: blueprint for Christian life.



Gospel of Luke

- Written between 80 and 90 CE.
- Early Greek Christian.
- Similar verses in Matthew's gospel.
- Indicates they used the same source.
- Story of "The Good Samaritan" and Christmas story.



The Parable of the Good Samaritan

²⁵ On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

²⁶ “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”

²⁷ He answered, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’^[a]; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’^[b]”

²⁸ “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

²⁹ But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

³⁰ In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹ A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³² So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two denarii^[c] and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’

³⁶ “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

³⁷ The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.”

Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”



Gospel of John

- One of 12 apostles.
- Written around 100 CE.
- Probably written by followers of John.
- Credited with 11th commandment: “I give you a new command. Love one another: As I have loved you, so you must love one another...”

(John 13:34-35)



Acts of Apostles

- Written by Luke.
- Outlines beginnings of Church.
- Describes work of Peter and Paul.
- Paul's letters written about 50 to 60 CE.
- Encouraged Christians during times of persecution.



Book of Revelation

- Controversial.
- Written about 95 CE by persecuted Christian named John.
- Apocalyptic literature, describing destruction of enemies of a persecuted people.

